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KOREA AND MARGATE

At last Saturday's session of the General Assembly, Sir Benegal Rau made a final appeal on India's behalf for one more effort to end the war in Korea by a negotiated peace. U.N. forces, he urged, should remain for the present south of the Parallel, and a renewed call should be issued to the North Koreans to agree, within a time limit, to a "cease-fire" and to the holding of general elections in the whole of Korea under U.N. supervision. His plea failed: by 47 votes to 5, with 8 abstentions, the Assembly endorsed the Eight-Power Plan which provides for the creation of a unified Korean State but sanctions the employment by General MacArthur of armed forces on both sides of the Parallel until peace is restored.

For this decision there is one strong argument. If the Government of Korea were given time to rebuild their temporarily disintegrated army, a military situation would arise in which U.N. forces would have to be retained in South Korea for an indefinite period of occupation. In that case it would indeed be difficult to get rid of Syngman Rhee, and the prospect of organising all-Korea elections would be remote.

We wish that, before sanctioning General MacArthur's thrust over the Parallel, the U.N. Assembly had more thoroughly considered the very real dangers expressed by India and had at least attempted to mitigate them by laying down conditions upon which the advance into North Korea should be undertaken. Nothing has been done - apart from vague promises - to convince China and the Asian Powers that the U.N., under General MacArthur, does not intend permanently to occupy North as well as South Korea. Though MacArthur has now yielded to pressure and removed American effectives from Formosa, no steps have at present been taken towards associating Communist China with the settlement in Korea.

We therefore share Indian apprehensions. To judge by the fierce resistance already encountered by American divisions, the operation will cost thousands of lives; and, though air supremacy will doubtless enable General MacArthur to blast his way along the main routes towards the Chinese frontier, it will be a formidable task to subdue guerilla resistance in the mountains. The *Times* correspondent reports that South Korean troops and police are being guilty of appalling atrocities as they advance: north of the Parallel, hostilities seem likely to take on an even greater savagery than hitherto. We doubt whether regular units of the Chinese Army will intervene; but it would be optimistic to expect the Chinese not to give aid and comfort to their Korean neighbours in the face of what they will now certainly regard as a Western imperialist "invasion". In that case, even if we avoid that extension of the war which Mr. Pannakar, the Indian Ambassador in Peking, has been warning Pandit Nehru is to be feared, we can at best expect in North Korea the sort of situation which existed during 1947-48 in Greece.

The Labour Party Conference.

Margate endorsed the Government's Korean policy with little apparent hesitation. Impressed by the Executive's proposals for a world plan to raise the living standards of backward peoples, delegates were content to give unanimous support to the Prime Minister for his conduct of the crisis, and to hope that wider questions of defence and foreign policy would be handled in a way which would enable Britain to co-operate with and strengthen the more liberal forces in the U.S.A.

In the domestic field, the closing sessions of the Conference failed to come closely to grips with any of the knotty problems. The dispute about further nationalisation was shelved under cover of Mr. Morrison's formula that sugar, cement and insurance were "still eligible for consideration"; the central problem of wage increases, during a period of rearmament and incipient inflation, was side-stepped. Electorally, as well as industrially, such deliberate blindness may prove expensive. This week Mr. Deakin has filed a claim on behalf of the dock-workers. Nothing now can prevent the engineers from renewing their demand for another pound a week. Since each union is completely autonomous, there can be no question of the more prosperous postponing their claims. But, if nothing is done to improve the status of those whose relative position has worsened since 1945, Labour's electoral position may be seriously prejudiced.

Lastly there is the problem of housing. No-one could find a chink in Mr. Bevan's demonstration, expressed with his usual pungency, that nothing whatsoever could be done to improve his Ministry's performance; if there were faults, they lay with the local authorities, and the remedy was in the hands of the electors. This is a double-edged argument. The local authority is Labour's chosen instrument of housing and, if that instrument is ineffective, the electorate may impatiently decide to try its luck with private enterprise.

The Right to Strike

To the great relief of the London public, work has been resumed in the plants of the North Thames Gas Board. Doubts as to the wisdom of prosecuting ten of the strikers remain. The first charge - breach of the 1875 Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act, which makes it an offence to deprive consumers, to any serious extent, of gas, water or electricity - was dropped by the prosecution. This was certainly the better part of judicial valour: it was much too late in the day to invoke an Act which has been a dead letter ever since its passage. The charge to which the men pleaded guilty, and on which (subject to appeal) they have been sentenced to one month's imprisonment, was that they took part in a stoppage of work which violated the provisions of Order 1305. This Order, made in 1940 under the stress of war, stipulates that strikes and lock-outs are illegal unless the dispute has been reported to the Minister of Labour, and the Minister has not referred it to the National Arbitration Tribunal or taken any other action on it during a 21-day period.

Two questions arise. First, was the Attorney-General, in what he has called a "quasi-judicial" exercise of his functions, justified in having recourse on this occasion to an Order which has never been consistently applied, or in selecting ten out of over 1400 men for prosecution? He has argued that the test is "whether a prosecution will serve the general public interest",and that the law must be enforced "in appropriate cases at appropriate times". Whether the prosecutions helped to shorten the strike is not known; but the Tory attack on the Attorney-General for saying, in effect, that the decision to prosecute was based on political expediency is absurd. In practise no Government has ever regarded itself as compelled to prosecute in such cases irrespective of the effects of its action; and whether it proceeds or not or against ten, fourteen hundred or any other number has always been within the Attorney-General's right to decide. Mr. Shawcross put aside a customary pretence.

The second, and wider question is whether it is wise,as matters stand, to adopt towards strikes an attitude which amounts to an attempt to make recourse to arbitration compulsory. If the National Arbitration Tribunal, as we urge in a leading article, were given by the Government a general directive which could be intelligibly applied and which commanded the confidence of trade unionists, the case for circumscribing to some extent the right to strike would be strong. As it is, in the absence of a formulated wage policy, we find it hard to reconcile the prosecution of the strikers with the Government's reiteration that wage questions must be left to collective bargaining. True, the gas stike was "unofficial"; but it is only fair to recall that the men's wage claim was originally lodged through the proper procedure as long ago as November, 1948. Not unnaturally, men feel that the heads of the great unions have become, in effect, Government officials whose interest it is to protect the administration - and incidentally their own jobs - rather than to fight the battle of the rank and file.

Britain's Gold Reserves

Mr. Gaitskell was right to deprecate undue elation at the past quarter's increase of £334m. in the sterling area's gold and dollar reserves. The improvement in the situation since sterling was devalued is indeed impressive; and, at £2756m., the reserves are double what they were at the critical nadir reached in 1949. There are, however, several points to be borne in mind. First, there seems to be evidence that some part of the recent gain has been due to a speculative movement from dollars into sterling. Secondly, it would be rash to assume that members of the sterling area other than Britain can be relied on to continue indefinitely their recent austerity in purchases from the U.S.A. Thirdly, though the American rearmament boom has led to much larger dollar earning by the primary-producing countries in the sterling area, the resulting inflation of world prices means that the sterling area's gold reserve has got to serve as a credit base for a much more highly priced volume of transactions. Moreover, apart from the fact that the rearmament drive may affect adversely Britain's own exports, and may - particularly if it be true that the U.S.A. means to refuse Britain's request for dollar aid in rearming - substantially increase the cost of imports of needful raw materials. Finally, it should be appreciated that out of the past year's gain of £1,331m. in the reserves, £995m represents receipts from Marshall Aid. The sterling area's gold and dollar surplus from current payments over the past twelve months has been £376m. - a satisfactory figure, but one which compares (be it recalled) with a loss in the previous six months of £1,170m. Talk of revaluing the pound or making it freely convertible is fantastically premature.

Paris, Korea and Germany

Our Paris Correspondent writes: Though Korea continues to be in the centre of public attention here, much is also being made in the French press of what is called the "Franco-American conflict" over German rearmament. Mr. Bruce, the U.S. Ambassador, who rushed to Washington after his long meeting with M. Pleven, is said to have talked about "the most serious conflict between the two countries since the war". It seems, indeed, that, for the present, the (relatively) "hard" line of MM. Moch, Petsche and (perhaps) Pleven is dominating the "soft" line of M. Schuman and Rene Mayer, and this "hard" line, while not rejecting German rearmament in the long run, consists in opposing the principle of German rearmament before the formation of a unified European army. However, the Americans seem determined to go ahead with the formation of "substantial" German units, and all the news from Germany suggests that General Manteuffel and company have received every encouragement from the Americans to proceed with their plans.

The problem for the French is to find a face-saving device before the meeting of the Atlantic Defence Council on October 28. Already reports are current to the effect that Washington will promise the French that the German troops in the European army will be much less numerous than the others. But for how long? Moreover, apart from Germany, there is between France and the U.S.A. another difference, similar to that between the U.S.A. and Britain. For their own rearmament, the French would prefer "free dollars" to the completed equipment offered them by the Americans. This threat of continued unemployment in certain French heavy industries is accompanied by threats of growing inflation, higher taxes, and of a rise in prices which, on the retail market, has already begun to assume alarming proportions.

THE PRINTING DISPUTE

The evidence lodged by both sides at the Court of Enquiry, which adjourned on October 10th, has revealed that the dispute between the London Society of Compositors and the London Master Printers' Association is complicated by differences as to the desirable rate of recruitment and embittered by personal antagonisms and a background of protracted guerilla war. The main bone of contention, however, is the demand of the London Compositors for a minimum wage of £8 a week. To this demand, on the face of it reasonable, since most compositors already receive more than £8, the Master Printers' Association has replied that, to judge from past experience, a mere increase in the minimum without any gain in actual earnings would not in practice be accepted by the men. They would demand that "extras" (often amounting to over £1 a week) should continue unchanged in spite of the rise in the basic rate. Further, they argue, any increase in compositors' wages would inevitably lead to a demand for similar wage increases in other, more numerous groups of labour in the printing industry. The Court's findings are expected before the end of this week.

Meanwhile we have again to ask the indulgence of readers and advertisers for another, though slightly larger, makeshift issue of the "New Statesman and Nation". It has been produced in circumstances of great difficulty.

SANITY OR SCRAMBLE

The rank-and-file revolt at Brighton against wage-restraint should have compelled the Labour Party Conference at Margate to face an issue that is already urgent and which is likely to dominate all our politics in the near future. It was made even more urgent by the substantial increase in wages awarded lately to farm workers by the Agricultural Wages Board. The problem, however, was treated with a shocking lack of realism. The resolution which was adopted with the assent of the Executive called upon the Government to increase real wages by reducing prices and profits. Yet, as Mr. Crosland pointed out and as most delegates must have realised, it is clear that the impact of re-armament on world supplies is bound to result in an upward movement of prices which cannot be stemmed by any action which it is politically practicable for the Government to take.

As for profits and wealth in general, it is true that in a "tight" national situation social justice might demand both a stiff capital levy and the extinction of all income above, say, £2,000. The effect, however, of such measures on the demand for, and the cost of articles entering into working-class consumption would be insignificant. The choice, in short, is not between stable prices and a rising cost of living, but between a disorderly scramble for wage increases, with the risk of repetition of incidents like the London gas stoppage, and an attempt to regulate wage claims on principles which bear some relation to the size of the cake to be divided and a sane assessment of the "value" to the nation of particular kinds of work. It is surely time that responsible Ministers like Mr. James Griffiths stopped talking as if a "wage policy" were an offence against the immaculate conception of trade unionism, or as if the Government's attitude to wage demands over the past two years had not represented a considerable interference with the free play of collective bargaining.

Practically, the greatest among many difficulties is that in the wage-system today two quite irreconcilable principles are in conflict. On the one side is the "welfare" principle of the minimum standard of civilised living, for which Socialists have always fought; on the other is the principle, sacred to the trade unions of skilled workers and to the public opinion of the skilled labour classes, of differentials for work of higher skill and responsibility.

Some Socialists are too ready to dismiss the insistence on differentials as a sign of craft selfishness, to which no sympathy should be extended; but it is not at all surprising that most skilled workers do not see the matter in this light. Those who do not belong to the manual working classes are apt to be unaware of the great extent to which the differential wage-rates of the skilled workers have already been reduced. Mr. Allen Flanders, in the current issue of the Bulletin of the Oxford Institute of Statistics, gives some figures which illustrate this point. In engineering the labourer's minimum rate in 1914 was on the average 59% of the skilled rate; in 1939 it was 75%, and now it is 86%. For bricklaying the corresponding figures are 71%, 75% and 80%. For the footplate grades on the railways they are 67%, 72% and 86%. In the shipyards they are 56%, 72% and 83%. This same tendency runs right through the industries in which there is a sharp cleavage between craftsmen and labourers.

No doubt, many people will be disposed to argue that the general levelling tendency in wage-rates is a good thing because it makes for a nearer approach to equality. But is the skilled worker really expected to accept this argument when he sees no tendency at work towards levelling down either profits or the higher business salaries? In salaries other than business this tendency is present; but it is at industrial profits and managerial incomes that the industrial worker naturally looks first and most. He will not accept readily an equalising tendency that seems to him to be limited to the working class - and who can blame him?

The issues raised by the conflict of claims on a "wages fund" restricted by the limited supplies of available consumers' goods are clearly of such a nature that the trade unions cannot possibly be expected to settle them among themselves. The fundamental decisions will have to be made by some authority which is outside their internal differences; and there is no body except the Government, or some tribunal acting directly under the Government, to which such a task can be entrusted. It is easy to understand both the Government's reluctance to undertake this responsibility and the unwillingness of the trade union leaders to ask it to do so; for the tradition is strong that, outside a limited group of "sweated" or underpaid trades, the Government should not usually become a party to industrial disputes. This tradition, however, cannot be maintained in a situation in which an appreciable part of industry has been transferred to public ownership and operation; nor can it apply to a state of affairs in which the entire national economy is subject to a pressure which limits both the available supplies of consumers' goods as well as the freedom to meet increased demands by allowing prices to rise uncontrolled. These two facts in combination make it indispensable for the Government to become, in the last resort, the arbiter in wage matters.

In terms of practical policy, what does this imply? First of all, some body instructed, like the Commonwealth Arbitration Court in Australia, to lay down and to vary from time to time a basic minimum wage sufficient to ensure a tolerable standard of living, or to get as near to such a standard as the economic condition of the country makes it possible to get. Secondly, either a separate tribunal or the same body acting through a number of panels but guided by a common set of principles, to hear applications for wages above the minimum level in all cases where the parties have failed to settle their differences by collective bargaining. The differences between this proposal and what now exists are, first, that there is at present no body authorised to define a minimum living wage, and secondly, that the existing National Arbitration Tribunal neither has all the unsettled disputes referred to it nor acts on any defined principles in dealing with those which are - as indeed it cannot as long as many disputes are being arbitrated on by other agencies.

It is not possible to define in vacuo the principles on which the proposed tribunal should act in awarding differentials in particular cases. The notion of a "points" system for skills and responsibilities is attractive; but the data on which such a system would have to be based and would take many years to work out even if the principle were accepted. The biggest immediate problem, with so little margin to play with, would be that of meeting the reasonable claims of skilled workers who are not in a position to make high piecework or overtime earnings - in addition, of course, to defining the national minimum. For the rest, it would be necessary to proceed experimentally, as was done in Australia, but from the first to try to give clear reasons for awards and to relate what was awarded in one case to what was awarded in others.

We are not suggesting that some wages cannot be raised at the expense of profits, or that the tribunal should in any way supersede collective bargaining; it would come into operation only when the parties had failed to agree, as the N.A.T. or some other tribunal does now. We are, however, suggesting that, in order to give the tribunal a basis on which to work, the Government itself, after consultation with the Trades Union Congress and the employers, should announce publicly the round sum available for wages - and also for other forms of income - and should relate its wage-policy to its policy in respect of profits and to the needs for investment and the available supplies of consumers' goods. On some such basis there will be a chance of sensible agreement.

LONDON DIARY

The B.B.C.'s duty is to uphold the right of free debate. That principle, as the public quickly saw, is involved in the withdrawal of "Party Manners". But as usual when such issues arise, the public find it difficult to differentiate between the principle and the facts of a particular case. At a commercial theatre where presumably people pay to see a play they choose, Mr. Gielgud's farce could be treated as an amusing trifle; televised, it seemed to most people a party political broadcast. In party political controversy the B.B.C. tries to hold an exact balance between different points of view, but to be forced to apply this principle to drama would be intolerable. If "Party Manners" were allowed to set a precedent, then the B.B.C. would be compelled to put on a quota of Labour propagandist plays and of Unity Communist revues. Therefore, without any "Government pressure", the B.B.C. decided that "Party Manners" was not suitable. So I conclude that the public is right in getting excited about the principle, but confused about the facts in this case.

* * *

I was distressed to hear of the perfunctory honours paid to Harold Laski at the Labour Party Conference this year. A resolution was moved quite inadequately from the floor and then Sam Watson said a few words for the Executive. He rightly emphasised Laski's enormous influence outside this country and then went on to remark that he was notable for his intelligence and his friendship. "It is for the latter that he will be remembered by the Labour Movement". Fear of ideas and of the intellectuals, who carry these dangerous bacilli, could scarcely be carried further! A more adequate commemoration of Laski occurred, I gather, the next day at a crowded Tribune supper where Nye Bevan was billed to speak on the future of Socialism. He had just received a tremendous ovation for his speech winding up the debate on the Executive's policy statement; and he chose therefore to talk quite informally about the influence of ideas on British Socialism. Several people who were there have told me that is was an unforgettable experience especially when Nye contrasted the tentative and adventurous nature of theoretical thought with the crude definitiveness which practical politicians have to adopt and argued that it was the writings of Laski and the unorthodox political education of the Left Book Club which prepared the way for the 1945 victory. Ideas, he concluded, unpopular though they are bound to be, are even more necessary when Labour is in power. I agree, and I hope that Michael Foot will follow this advice in planning his Tribune pamphlets. Propaganda and invective should have their place but what is most needed is the sort of adventure in ideas which, pace Sam Watson, strained the relations between Laski and some of the politicians on the Executive.

* * *

Every day I look across the Thames at Charing Cross and see the last touches being put to the new Concert Hall, and watch the dwarfs clambering about the shining Dome of Discovery. When I walk on the South Bank I am astonished. Everyone - even the editor of the Evening Standard - will want to come and see Westminster in this new and superb perspective. Everyone? Yes, that 's the rub. If everyone wants to come how will they all get in? According to the official estimate there will be room for about 60,000 people at a time at the Westminster site and about the same number at Battersea, and it is calculated that if there is a fairly even flow of visitors, about an equal number coming and going at any time, some 300,000 people can visit the whole Exhibition in a single day. Surely these are somewhat unlikely conditions? I cannot help picturing queues stretching from the Elephant and Castle in one direction and to Trafalgar Square and Blackfriars in other directions. It is to meet the threat of vast crowding that the charges for entrance are very expensive. I suppose the authorities will defend this by saying that to avoid death by suffocation, they must make the decision to go to the Festival a serious one like going to the theatre and not a passing inclination like visiting the movies. I am sure they are wise in restricting casual entrance to the afternoon after 5 o'clock. I understand that the idea here is that charabancs and special train loads of visitors from such towns as Glasgow and Manchester will be sure of finding room when they arrive with their entrance tickets.

* * *

It was distressing to see among the group of Czech lecturers and professors who have just been dismissed from Prague University the name of Otakar Vocadlo. I have known him ever since he came over here as Lecturer on Slavonic Studies not so long after the first world war. As a young soldier in 1917, he helped to free his country from the Austrians; I well remember the story of how he and a few other lads in Austrian uniform seized a Czech railway station and held it with a machine gun. He was a close friend of Capek; it was with him in 1934 that I first met Benes after his return from Moscow where he had successfully sought Stalin's support against the rising power of Hitler. During the Second World War, Vocadlo was long a prisoner in a German concentration camp. After the war, Kings College, Cambridge, gave him a holiday here in which to recover his health, and before he left England, he gave a most remarkable broadcast describing how, with the aid of a smuggled volume of English poetry, he was sometimes able to comfort the last hours of prisoners who were to be murdered next day by the Nazis. Vocadlo has a splendid anti-Fascist record. He has always been a staunch supporter of the Moscow-Prague alliance. He has also taught his students to believe in the right to think for themselves.

* * *

I am glad to see that our six visitors from Communist China, who were originally only granted visas for a week, are now allowed to stay here for a month. It is regrettable that in their first week they were not able to accept invitations to the Labour Conference nor even to private gatherings in Margate and London. Perhaps with a longer period ahead of them they will now be able to meet many friends with a long record of support for Mao Tse-tung's China, and they will. I hope, be able to discover for themselves the almost universal feeling of friendship in this country for the New China. If the object of their visit is to cultivate friendship between China and this country, the British-Chinese Friendship Association which has invited them will see to it that their contacts here are as wide as possible.

* * *

Every now and again the British public wakes up to discover that 8,000 people are killed every year in motor accidents on British roads, and that nothing effective has been done about it since the last time there was a row. As usual, one pundit suggests, by way of remedy, that the rolling English road should be straightened out, thereby enabling motorists to kill people at a higher speed than they do at present; another urges that they should more often be sent to prison and have their licences taken away. A motorist myself, I sympathise with these emotions. Not long ago I met a cavalcade of buses, charabancs and private cars coming along in a solid 40 mile-an-hour torrent from Newmarket. Twice, drivers drew out of the procession and forced me to save their worthless lives (and incidentally my own) by pulling on to the verge. I would willingly have hastened these drivers on their way to perdition, but anger does not meet the real difficulty. How can any bench of magistrates discriminate between wilful recklessness and misjudgement? How often, without independent witnesses, can they tell who was really to blame? The most useful proposal is to revive the courtesy cops. If you know that the eye of the law is watching, you are likely to observe the 30 mile-an-hour limit and be far more careful about cutting in and cornering on your own side of the road. Many years ago I wrote: "Every driver must regard every pedestrian and cyclist as a suicidal lunatic and every other driver as a homicidal one". Still true, but this 11th Commandment is no more likely to be obeyed than the other Ten unless there are a lot of policemen about the place.

CRITIC

AMERICA'S ARMS BOOM

The other day, here in Washington, a newspaper headlined a story which suggested that the Pentagon was worried lest success in Korea should weaken public support for the mobilisation programme. This does not mean that there is any prospect that this programme will be scaled down. But as soon as the fighting ends, and "the boys" from Dallas and Decatur are no longer dying across the Pacific, it is going to be much more difficult to persuade both Congress and the public to accept some of the more distasteful consequences of rearmament. Congress, for instance, has already adjourned without imposing an Excess Profits Tax, and when it meets again after the elections, it will be under heavy pressure - from the National Association of Manufacturers, for example - to find an alternative means of taxing increased corporation profits, which are expected to reach more than $30 billion before taxes. Similarly, if a general war seems less imminent, the public will not take kindly to shortages of electrical equipment, household goods made of steel, or automobiles, or to sharply increased prices of clothing, furnishings and food.

There is very little slack in the U.S. economy to-day; unemployment is now below three million - less than half the total at the beginning of this year - and industry is now running close to capacity, especially in steel. In 1939, steel production was 53 million tons a year. Now it is over 100 million, and the mills can barely keep up with the demands of industry, though defence plants are using little more than three per cent. of their output, as against fifty-seven per cent. in 1944.

I take manpower and steel as examples, because they are the sinews of war. There is already a shortage of labour in the United States. I heard this week of one factory in Cleveland that has a mobile recruiting office touring the city to find workers. Of course, there are several ways of overcoming this shortage. One is to lengthen the working week, and the average week has in fact already gone up by nearly two hours. Another is to bring in marginal workers, such as married women, or to keep older men on the payroll. But no one doubts that a great many workers will have to be switched from making consumer goods to war equipment, just as steel and other materials will be diverted away from the domestic market.

How much of his present prosperity must John Doe give up? The President's programme estimates that defence spending will reach an annual rate of $30 billion by the middle of next year. This sum is expected to meet the costs of the Korean war and to carry the United States some way towards an army of eighteen divisions, an air force of seventy groups, and a navy grouped around twenty-seven aircraft carriers and three battleships, enrolling a total of three million men. It also includes about four billion dollars allocated to arming the allies of the U.S. But nobody here regards these figures as more than working estimates. Too many unknown factors are involved. What, for instance, is going to be the price of new aircraft, or tanks or other equipment? They are at present much more costly than they were in wartime. And it has cost the U.S. about $80 billions over the last five years, to bring its armed forces up to their present level, which is now considered woefully inadequate. Clearly, the programme can only be carried out by making John Doe cut down his personal consumption, perhaps by a tenth, perhaps by more.

Yet such things now seem unavoidable, and their impact will be felt the more because the new armament drive has started at the peak of American prosperity. Whatever may happen next in Korea, the United States is committed to expand both its own defences and those of its allies, and that commitment can be fulfilled only by diverting money and resources away from television sets and refrigerators and into radar and munitions.

The dangers of inflation are obvious. Increased war spending will be putting more money into the market, even if nominal wage-rates do not rise. Overtime alone will account for millions of dollars. At the same time, there will be fewer goods to buy. The President's economic advisers, it is true, do not expect the programme to make a serious impact on civilian production until sometime in the New Year, when contracts have been allocated and factories begin to turn over to military production. But in the past week, Secretary of Commerce Sawyer has been talking of the "critical strains", and Mr. McCabe, the Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, has said. "Inflation is here right now. We have to cut down the spending of all but the lowest income group."

There are plenty of statistics to support this view. Since the outbreak of war in Korea, the average cost of a group of essential commodities has jumped by more than twenty per cent.; food prices are up by nearly ten per cent., and clothing by the same amount. Some raw materials have become fantastically costly. Lead has risen more than fifty per cent., zinc sixty-two, rubber eighty, steel scrap sixty and wool forty-five, and certain key components have doubled in price.

There is no doubt, of course, about the ability of the American economy to produce the required equipment. To-day, the gross national product is more than $100 billions (1949 dollars) above the 1939 level, and it is still rising towards a total of $275 billions for this year. Petroleum production is close to twice the 1939 level; electricity output is twice the size of pre-war; aluminium is six times as plentiful. Industry as a whole is producing twice as much as it did in 1939. Turned towards all-out war production, the American economy could unquestionably and rapidly surpass its enormous output during the late war.

But the problem is how to dovetail a limited defence programme, in time of peace, into the present boom. Before Congress adjourned, it passed the Defence Production Act, which gave President Truman wide powers to impose controls over production, materials and credit, to impose ceilings on prices and wages, and to introduce rationing. Apart from certain limited steps that have already been taken, it is unlikely that the President will invoke these powers before the November elections, for controls are still disliked by enough Americans to make them an electoral hazard for the Democratic Party. To attempt to roll prices back to the May-June level might even now prove an impossible undertaking, though that seems to be the Administration's present intention, if mounting inflationary pressure forces it to impose controls. No one here doubts that, in the absence of price control, or of "voluntary" stabilisation of prices, the trade unions will soon be pressing for a new round of wage increases. There are already signs of this, and I know that this is causing some anxiety among the President's advisers.

There is some hope that a stiff fiscal policy could, for this financial year at least, hold off inflation. But higher tax rates take time to become effective, and Congress will be slow to make any drastic increases, in spite of solemn talk about paying for the programme out of taxes as far as possible. The attempt to cut down instalment buying by tightening credit conditions, moreover, has not yet shown much result. An effort will be made to cut federal expenditure on non-military purposes, but this too will take time and encounter strong resistance. Some savings, of course, are automatic. A fall in unemployment and a rise in farm prices may save a few billion dollars in relief and farm support payments. If the international situation eases, there will be a decline in hoarding and in purchases of durable consumer goods, for many people have bought or ordered cars and washing machines and television sets for fear of coming shortages. Indeed, one conservative economist suggested to me this week that there might even be a slight deflationary tendency in the next month or so, for these reasons, though to me they seem insufficient to offset the inflationary pressure now clearly at work.

In the next few months, unless there is early and spirited action by the Administration, that inflation is unlikely to be checked. Certainly, any further increase in Federal spending, beyond the present programme, financed as it must be in part by borrowing, would mean a galloping inflation unless controls similar in kind to those employed in wartime Britain were enforced to tighten John Doe's belt a few notches. But how far will John Doe be willing to tighten his belt unless a general war continues to seem close? Full-scale mobilisation still looks a long way off.

Washington, September 30th. NORMAN MACKENZIE

CITY OF MAKE-BELIEVE II

Half-empty, for even an espresso counts for something in the budget of a Triestine family, the big café in the Piazza Unità offered a tempting row of empty chairs to a passing gang of little ruffians. As they fell, overturned by swift, grubby hands, the white-coated waiter had the air of one who spat. "American democracy", was his outraged comment. Nonsense, of course; little boys in Italy upset empty café chairs when the piazze were full of jack-booted young men intent on preserving the honour of the Duce's Italy. What my waiter was doing was to void himself for an instant of the irrational hatred which an Occupation provokes. The British in Trieste are disliked; but the dislike is mixed with the slightly patronising sympathy merited by mercenaries, fellow-victims of a trans-Atlantic conquerer's Diktat. The Americans are just loathed - the Americans and all they stand for. It is the hatred of debtor towards creditor, of drug-addict to his supplier.

Installed, twenty kilometres away, in the Arthurian (not to say MacArthurian) ambiente of Duino, where Rilke wrote his Elegien, General Airey, Military Governor of Trieste, is doubtless sublimely unaware of the real emotions of his Triestine subjects. The Generalissimo is fond of airing his knowledge of Italian in speeches which proclaim the progress of Zone A towards prosperity and happiness in conditions of law, order and political security. There is certainly no doubt about the law and order; in a population of 310,000 (of whom 280,000 are in Trieste itself) an Occupation force of 9,000 troops, plus 4,500 blue-shirted Security Police under Allied control, can be relied on to deal adequately with the "bitter and unscrupulous" opposition of which General Airey's reports complain. But the Triestini neither believe in the reality of their promised prosperity, nor are happy in contemplation of their progress.

To begin with, they cannot see any real future for Trieste as a port dependent almost exclusively on Austrian traffic. True, the Aquila oil refinery is being reconstructed; a seed-processing plant is working again; and a number of small light industries are being fostered by Marshall Aid. But the lynch-pin of Trieste's industrial economy is the shipyards; and, when the present E.R.P.-financed contracts for Italy are completed, the Cantieri Riuniti have no orders on their books to keep their workers going. The fishing fleet, admittedly, has been re-built, and E.R.P. supplies passing through the port for Austria provide employment for about 2,000 dockers; but the whole set-up is so artificial, and would collapse so completely if Marshall Aid stopped and Allied troops left Austria, that confidence in the long-term future of Trieste is wholly lacking. For the moment, the problem is masked by military and E.C.A. expenditure; compared with the impoverishment and paralysis of economic activity in Capo d'Istria, across the zonal frontier, conditions of life in Zone A are good. Moreover, for the bourgeoisie, there are a few fat profits to be made through "cover-firms" which facilitate curious transactions between the Yugoslav Government and such dissimilar customers as the Skoda Works and Franco Spain, whose elegant consul sits as near the Free Territory as he can - in Venice. But these deals mean nothing to the average Triestino: all he knows is that he is earning - if he is not among the 20 per cent unemployed - say, £8. 10s. to £4 a week, and that there would be poor prospects of work or wages if the Alleati left.

So, as I have said, there is a great deal of make-believe in the demand for Allied evacuation. Yet, as all the decent elements in Trieste know, the Occupation is demoralising the city. It is not only that the American troops, with their fantastically high pay, buy up pretty girls and add to the acute housing shortage by installing their mistresses in apartments pre-empted with dollars. It is not only that there is the inevitable black-market trafficking in P.X. and N.A.A.F.I. goods. The real trouble is that Anglo-American annexation - for that is what the administration of Zone A has become - has turned Trieste into a colony and given the inhabitants something of the mentality - half subservient, half resentful - of the "Scorpions" of the Rock. In this Adriatic Gibraltar, where 500 Herrenvolk families occupy coveted buildings and an American sergeant has a bigger income than senior officials in the Prefettura, the most painful impression one gains is made, not by the shabby streets or the general air of a once rich port now down at the heels, but by the cynical, defeated faces of the "free" population.

What are we doing in Trieste? After a week of observation and inquiry, I confess I have no clue. Professedly we have no strategic ambitions here and are only "putting the city into shape" preparatory to its return to Italy. Since Albania could virtually close the Adriatic in the event of a world war, Trieste has no obvious naval value; and there is no site for an air base. British disavowels of aggressive military intentions may be accepted. But though General Airey reiterates that the re-incorporation of the city with Italy is the only ultimate solution, there is every indication that the British and American forces are "digging in" for a long, one might say indefinite, stay. Why? To have an additional port through which supplies might reach Tito's divisions in Croatia if the Red Army struck South? Or just to hold an Adriatic pawn for use in some power-politics gambit not yet clearly foreseen? It is anyone's guess, and nobody here will tell you what he really thinks. With one exception. A distinguished and liberal-minded Triestino, who had devoted much of his life to a study of racial relationships in Venezia Giulia, assured me that the real purpose of the Occupation is to afford more time for the demarcation of an ethnically just boundary between Zones A and B which both Italy and Yugoslavia might be asked to accept as a final, definitive frontier. He, I think, for all his patent sincerity, was unconsciously the greatest make-believer of all.

Trieste, September. AYLMER VALLANCE

THIS ENGLAND

Prizes are awarded of £1 for the first entry and 5/- for each of the others printed.
Paste entries on a POSTCARD.

In recording the death of Mr. E - in our last issue, we stated that he had worked on a farm most of his life. This should have read that he had been a farmer most of his life. - Boston Guardian. (Ken Pearson).

Lieut.-Com. B -, fishery officer, reported that Devon's coastal waters had been experiencing the greatest invasion of octopuses for at least 50 years. It was passed on to him by a fisherman in a small Devon port that the reason for the invasion was that Russian trawlers which visited the area some time ago were fitted with tanks containing octopuses, and these were released in the Channel near the coast. - Teignmouth Post. (F.V. Bennetts).

The statement to the London Evening Papers Branch by one of its members that he had had meat thrown at him at Smithfield, lent poignancy to a discussion on an effort to make trade unionists more friendly with Pressmen covering industrial disputes. - Journalist. (T. Lancaster).

STEEPLE JACK

Popular fancy has painted the steeplejack in curiously ribald colours. Cartoonists show him as an aerial buffoon, an involuntary Icarus continually stepping back into space to admire his work; or he is pictured in a variety of humiliating postures, desperately clinging to towers of tottering brickwork. In a cartoon I have before me, a steeplejack, guilty of some undisclosed tort, is being chased round the rim of a brick stack by his umbrella-wielding wife. The lion tamer, the trapeze artist, and others of dangerous vocation, are, it is true, also victims of the "banana skin" school of humour. But these at least have their rolls of drums, lights, huzzahs, and autograph books to be signed. The steeplejack lacks urgency of attraction for the connoisseurs of danger. He is too far away to be gaped at satisfactorily; he is anonymous, and his purpose is obscure. Yet, in truth, he is an exception to the general rule that few members of the "eccentric" professions are as interesting as their jobs. The "Wall of Death" rider and the "Human Cannonball" generally turn out to be very dull dogs, as any reporter will tell you. The steeplejack is different. He is a fierce individualist, not surprisingly; and also he is often well-read, supple-minded, and aware of contemporary problems. Instead of the comic artists' rowdy clowns, you will find among them men who will argue about the poetry of T.S. Eliot or the legality of the Security Council's attitude to Northern Korea.

Modernity, it must be admitted, is killing the trade. It began to die in the early 1900's with the introduction of steel chimneys, which gradually burn away and need not be demolished; and prefabrication and improved lifting gear are hastening its death. There are now fewer than 500 steeplejacks in the country practising an art which probably began with the Tower of Babel, and enriched the Middle Ages, when steeplejacks were also craftsmen who carved designs on cathedral and castle. They were independent of the Guilds and split into the small family groups which still characterise steeplejacking. Today, it is one of the few trades of importance without a Union. Several attempts have been made - one is in progress at the moment - to weld steeplejacks into a bargaining body; but each has failed. Most steeplejacks admit to being Socialists, but of a mainly ethical persuasion. Their attitude is governed by the idea that each man is well able to talk terms with his own boss, and that steeplejack bosses are a pretty good crowd anyway.

This scheme of things, indeed, has a fair working success. Most steeplejacks earn from £15 to £20 a week, although it is usually a six-day week. The fifteen sizeable firms in London pay tyro steeplejacks half a crown an hour and experienced hands from 3s. 6d. to 4s. 6d. an hour. But a large part of their wage is made up by an endless list of extra payments, such as "dirty" money of an extra five shillings a day for the many jobs involving grease and grime, "danger" money, which may bring in several additional pounds a week, and bonuses for quickly completed jobs. Two or three guineas is paid as lodging allowance for jobs away from home. Few work less than a ten-hour day, and "rush" jobs will see them putting in twelve to fifteen hours for days at a stretch, sometimes sleeping "on the job" in the boiler houses of disused factories. Thus, it seems, is hardihood of spirit promoted. But, astonishingly, many steeplejacks, particularly the older ones, admit that they need to be drunk before making a climb. Heavy smoking is rare, because of the fear of dizziness, but alcohol takes the edge from fear. After more than 20 years, one of London's best-known steeplejacks still drinks the equivalent of four large whiskies from a bottle he takes to work each morning, before he thinks of climbing. Two Irish steeplejacks were recently fined for dancing and singing drunkenly on top of a 100-foot building.

Hugh Gregory has made more than 4,000 climbs in his 17 years career, and he confesses that each has frightened him almost as much as the first. The ideal steeplejack is about 5ft. 8in. and should weigh no more than 12 stone; but Hugh, who looks like a plumper, fatherly Emlyn Williams, is some two inches and twenty pounds over that standard. As a steeplejack must be, he is an expert carpenter, welder and bricklayer. His jobs may include demolishing a chimney stack brick by brick, repairing a weather vane on top of a church, or fixing an advertising sign on the top of a building. He wears no safety device because that would restrict his movements.

A few days ago, we stood at the bottom of a 130-foot brick stack at Hornsey. It had been condemned some weeks previously, and it must come down brick by brick. It swayed gently like a blind giant's dirty finger trying to write a short message in the sky. Steeplejacks use two sizes of ladder, eight and sixteen feet. The larger size was being used this day, and Hugh leant it against the bottom of the stack while he hammered a long, thick nail, known as a "dog" into the mortar. He hung the top of the first ladder over the "dog," and climbed with a second ladder slung over his shoulder. The bottom of ladder number two fitted into two small cups at the top of the first. The second ladder was secured with a "dog," and Hugh climbed down a few feet while one of his two mates handed him a third ladder. Each time he wanted a ladder, he had to descend an ever increasing distance, but in half an hour he was straddling the over-sailing at the chimney top, with a long, straight line of ladders reaching to the ground below. Soon the three of them were hammering away the bricks, section by section, and lowering them in baskets to the ground. In three weeks the chimney would be gone.

Hugh himself, who lives in a tidy villa at Gidea Park with his wife and two daughters, averages about £16 a week with another £8 added on for "expenses." His worst enemy is fibrositis, which once left him sprawling on top of a brick stack for five minutes before he was noticed and lowered to the ground with ropes. On another occasion, he missed his handhold and fell, without serious hurt, twenty feet on to the top of a corrugated iron roof.

Death and serious injuries are fortunately rare, but curiously, when they do happen, a member of the family owning the concern is often involved. Of the fifty British steeple-jacking firms, there is hardly one where a member of the family has not been killed. There is a grim superstition that a family concern will not flourish unless one of them is killed on duty - an odd throwback to the Romans, who built a living person into their bridges to propitiate the gods. In the eyes of the insurance companies, steeplejacks are "unattractive risks." A small number will accept their accident and life insurance, but premiums are usually treble the normal.

Firms charge about £1 a foot for demolition work and £5 a foot for rebuilding commissions. For a simple repair to the weather vane of a church, the charge is about £30, but steeple-jackers say that churches are hiring them less and less. The industry in fact, is not wealthy, and the combined profit of London's fifteen firms amounted to only £40,000 last year, out of a turnover of some £700,000. The largest concern made a profit of £3,000 out of a total income of £40,000.

Possibly there is encouragement for the trade in the professed desire of so many unlikely people to be steeplejacks. An ex-submarine commander and a Bachelor of Arts have, since the war, become highly skilled professionals. When Mr. John Eserin, one of steeplejackery's originals, and prospective Labour candidate for Southgate, wrote to The Times some eighteen months ago, asking for Public School men with a "sense of honour and decency" he received more than 1,500 letters, among them a professor of archæology, Civil Servants, schoolteachers, and housewives.

RICHARD MARTIN

BOOK REVIEWS

HURTON'S ARABIAN NIGHTS

"The Thousand and One Nights". By Sir Richard Burton. Selected by P.H. Newby. Arthur Barker. 18s.

If we put aside the drawing room version of E.W. Lane there are two editions of "The Thousand and One Nights" in English for the general reader: the sixteen volumes of Burton and, in recent years, the four volumes taken by Powys Mathers from the French translation of Madrus. Both of these are beyond the means of many readers and Mr. Newby's selection from Burton is therefore welcome. It contains over twenty tales, whose variety is as representative of the changes of the Arabian mood and its invention, as any selection can be.

To revive Burton when Madrus and Powys Mathers are incomparably the better writers, is to pay a tribute to the energy and eccentricity of a mannered genius. Burton's haphazard childhood on the Continent had made him a brilliant linguist, especially in the vernacular. He was one of the great English travellers and explorers; as a writer he had some of the insensibility of the obstinate, the coarse-grain of a violent nature, the exuberance and a touch of vulgarity of one hugely involved in life. He was, as some of his biographers have said, a renegade of his time, an Elizabethan born too late. What he did do, after his spectacular journeys to Mecca and Harar and after a long interval of disheartening employment, was to produce, in the "Nights", a Victorian best-seller; and here one must pause to consider this provoking fact.

As Mr. Newby says, when Antoine Galland's first translation of the "Nights" came out in the early years of the eighteenth century, a new phase in the penetration of the Western by the Eastern mind, can be hazily seen. Mr. Newby makes a generalisation which is certainly half true when he says that, until then, Europeans had fed their imaginations upon Greece and Rome; now they advanced beyond into Egypt, Arabia and Persia. The serious and very suggestive omission in that statement, is that Europeans had already been for centuries in contact with the East through the Old Testament, and it was, to some extent, from the Biblical view of the East that the "Nights" enlarged the reader. For the Old Testament was the official propaganda of a rising people, a re-writing of history for political ends, done in the teeth of powerful and exquisitely developed civilisations - called "abominations" etc. - and almost the first thing we feel when we pick up the "Nights" is the heady freedom from an insistent propaganda. We leave the aggressive political and religious imagination for that of the artist who pays his duty to Allah, and (no doubt aided by a faith which has invented a Paradise of sensual riches) is free henceforth to revel in marvels, plots, horrors, comedies and the fantasies of desire and the facts of bodily delight. It has been suggested by some ingenious scholars that the Biblical figure of Esther is either Shaharazad or Dunyazad; and all three are, indeed, Persian characters. One had only to compare the severe political treatment of this myth in the Bible with the transfiguration brought about by the imagination, to see that the "Nights" are the blossoming of repressed history.

The immediate effect of Galland's translation of the "Nights" was to start an Oriental vein in romanticism, for the book came at the right time. In "Vadig", in "Beckford", in a large number of English works down to Omar Khayyam, the new strain is seen. But by the time of Burton's translation, and as European imperialism advanced in the East, the fantasy becomes degraded. Omar Khayyam suggests Kipling in fancy dress. The "Nights" entrall the reader, for their story-telling is supreme in ingenuity, excitement, invention, the fulfilling of desire and the confirming of common experience; yet the nineteenth century ended by turning these tales against the East. The marvels are thought to be comic. The fantasies are burlesqued in pantomime and comic stories. The magic phrases which Burton rendered in an only too catching manner, become the hackneyed jokes of music hall and boys' stories. ("Adsum! Here am I, at thy service, O my lord. To hear is to obey"). Arab marvels, the flights through the air, the discoveries of treasure, the Jinn rising out of the bottle, the Ifrit in his cloud of dust, the beauties of the harem, the eunuchs and assassins, are turned into farce - which was our propaganda - and Arab fatalism becomes the Colonel's tale. The complex and aggressive European temperament disposed too briskly of these delicate contrivances. We had been trained on the purposiveness, the great moral and emotional richness of the Bible, in which our capital was sunk; and in those qualities, the "Nights" are indeed lacking; but it was a misfortune that Burton's translation of the greatest collection of tales in the world, which he annotated in the spirit of the anthropologist, should have come to us in a commercial age. To be just we must agree that part of this very vulgarisation of the tales was an expression of the novel pleasure they had given; possibly also, in degrading the tales, the Victorian reader was releasing the feeling that many of the Bible stories had required him to repress. He had been shocked but silent before the ambiguous picture of the Orient he had seen in the Bible; in the "Nights" there was no moral reason for silence any longer. The scandal caused by Burton's translation and its huge success seem, when looked at from a social point of view, to be elements in a nervous breakdown on the part of the public.

The supreme quality of the tales of Shaharazad is that they are all lyrical and mysterious. The teller of oral tales dare not lose that delicate and incalculable note. They tingle from event to event. Luck and desire animate events, and the ingenuity of the story-teller is spent on these and not on character - except perhaps in the comic tales - nor on any interesting variety of human emotion. Yet they shrewdly judge the variety of human fortune and that, though visited by magic, is always on the earth.

Many of Burton's famous footnotes are retained in this volume. They are egotistical, knowledgeable, amusing, pushful. "Her pimping instinct at once revealed the case to her", we read. Or again: "the usual 'pander-dodge' to get more money". His mannered writing was an imaginative attempt to catch the natural rhythm of the Arabic, the pungency of the life he had known; but whether this is successful is very doubtful. It strikes a note of excess. Compare Burton's treatment of the well-known moment when Ghanim bin Ayyub gets the drugged girl out of the chest:

> "Ho, Sabibah! Shajarat al-Durr! Nur-al Huda! Najmat-al Subh! be ye awake? Shuhwah, Nushad, Halwa, Zarifah, out on you, speak! But no one answered her, so she looked all around and said, "Woe's me! Have they entombed me in the tombs? O thou who knowest what man's thoughts enwombs and who givest compensation on the Day of Doom, who can have brought me from amid hanging screens and curtains veiling the harem-rooms and set me down between four tombs".

with the lines of Powys Mathers:

> "Where are you, Garden Flower, and you Dawn? Where are you all my ladies, Light on the Road, Night Star, Morning Star, Sweetness of Gardens? Why do you not answer?" As none spoke, the girl opened her eyes fully and looked about her. She cried in terror: "Ah me unhappy! I am alone among the tombs. Who has taken me from the beautiful curtains of my palace and thrown me upon the stones of the dead."

Which passage is closer to the feeling of the Arabic text I do not know, but it is plain which is the more franious and more touching version.

V.S.PRITCHETT

GUNTHERISM

"Roosevelt in Retrospect". By John Gunther. Hamish Hamilton. 21s.

John Gunther has a created a new genre of political journalism. He is neither a reporter, competing for spot news of the latest crisis, nor a pundit, like Walter Lippmann, lucubrating in the stratosphere of armchair statesmanship. With infinite tact and industry, he has made himself into a political Baedeker. At his own pace and according to his own taste, he compresses the politics of continents into guidebook form. Mountains, churches and picture-galleries are more enduring than three-star political celebrities; "isms" go out of fashion even more rapidly than architectural styles. The political Baedeker must be dated within ten years. But John Gunther goes placidly on his way, knowing there will always be a vast public for a fair-minded guide to politics which frankly admits its own superficiality.

Having found "Inside U.S.A." an invaluable companion on a recent American trip, I opened "Roosevelt in Retrospect" with lively curiosity. How would the Baedeker technique come off when applied not to a continent but to a famous personality? For John Gunther has refused to vary his methods in composing his study of Roosevelt. Once again, we are "inside", browsing through anecdotes, fragmentary conclusions, statistics and flashbacks. The inevitable bittyness of the Baedeker method is intensified by the division of the book into two parts, the first on Roosevelt's character, the second on his career. Mr. Gunther calls this experiment a 'profile in history'. This is surely a misnomer. What he has attempted here is a literary "pointillism". His medium is a vast canvas covered with neat blobs of colour which must be seen from a distance to achieve coherence.

But the whole point of pointillism was to escape from slavery to physical form and rediscover the play of light and colour - to reveal, not a profile, but an impression. It is not surprising, therefore, that Mr. Gunther blurs every issue, whether personal or political. "Roosevelt in Retrospect" is a portrait in which the sitter disintegrates into anecdote and becomes part of an entertaining background pattern. What began as a guidebook ends as a fuzzy impression of an epoch of history.

Mr. Gunther has obviously taken trouble. He has read an enormous number of the right people. All the material is here for a serious study of the greatest American politician since Lincoln. But biographical material demands composition: there must be a firm structure of interpretation such as Robert Sherwood employed to make the "White House Papers of Harry Hopkins" a great book. In his role as a good-natured guide, Mr. Gunther has a nervous fear of interpretation. Since Roosevelt's life, he seems to say, was full of irrelevant anecdotes and loose ends, his biography should be equally untidy and indefinite. It is clear that one of Mr. Gunther's intentions was to discredit the anti-Roosevelt mythology which has been developed since 1945 by the opponents of the New Deal. Unfortunately, however, he plays into the hands of the mythologists by combining a loyal discretion with partial admissions. We get plenty of allusions to Roosevelt's relations with the unsavoury bosses of the democratic machine, but no proper examination of his political ethic; and the first ten years of his career are sketched so lightly that nothing definite is revealed. We read a terse defence of the unconditional surrender policy announced at Casablanca, and then discover that the Quebec Conference, at which the Morganthau Plan was signed by the President and Mr. Churchill, is left without mention. We are told plenty of anecdotes and trivialities about Mrs. Roosevelt and the children, but on the President's private life we are left with a number of hints, all the more suggestive because Mr. Gunther could obviously have told us a lot more.

Perhaps the most striking feature of this book is the absence of one character - Harry Truman. Mr. Gunther justifies all his hero's failures of statesmanship by the exigencies of American politics; and we are given the impression that Roosevelt's sense of timing and leadership were well-nigh faultless. It might have been possible to believe this uncritically in 1946. But after four years of the Fair Deal and Truman's leadership it was surely necessary to compare the achievements of these two disparate personalities. Now that one can see what a simpler and less subtle man has accomplished in a no less difficult period of history, it should be possible to view his predecessor in perspective. I have an idea that Mr. Gunther felt such a comparison to be almost blasphemous and has preferred a blurred profile to the job of revealing the real features of Roosevelt which are still concealed by the public mask.

R.H.S. CROSSMAN

WORD-PAINTERS

"The Victorians - An Anthology". By Geoffrey Grigson. Routledge. 12s. 6d.

Mr. Grigson has scored a third bull's-eye with his new anthology. Difficult as it is in this period to spring surprises, his taste and learning enable him to present us with new posies of unfamiliar poems, and his book is equally delightful to read in the library, the train or the bath.

His intention is to represent the way the people wrote and felt in poetry, and to tell us "what the Victorians were about"; in this he seems to me to be singularly successful, and his anthology an excellent appendix to G.M. Young's epic Portrait of an Age. The gospel of work, money, snobbery, medievalism, the romance of the sea, loss of faith, the invention of nonsense rhymes - though Edward Lear is overworked - and the boisterous sarcasm of Gilbert are all here. Omissions: the cult of little children, and, in proportion to the rest, religion. Should there not have been, in that great church-going era, more religious poems, at least one hymn and an extract from a sermon (Robertson of Brighton is the man)? This is a game, however, at which anyone can play, and half the fun of anthologies. On the other side, it is good to see justice done to the rationalist tradition, the strongest and most constant of all the intellectual configurations of the age; so many books on the poets and prophets who radically criticised the rationalist assumptions, throw our view of Victorian thought and feeling out of perspective because they ignore the great body of educated opinion which accepted a modified utilitarianism and the hypotheses of science as self-evident axioms. Even Nature, as Mr. Grigson cleverly brings out, was reinterpreted in the light of science: the amateur geologists and botanists, the poets painting in words every flower in a dell, and the Pre-Raphaelites observing Nature through Ruskin's astonishingly accurate eyes, are trying to describe the Nature of the scientist and the artist in the same terms and are assailed by horrible imaginings when they find the task beyond them.

This anthology gives the welcome impression of being compiled by a mind which has come fresh to the Victorians and is able to communicate the pleasure in discovering minor poets such as James Smetham, Dobell, Alexander Smith and Allingham. Someone more soaked in the period might have netted more fish, but might not have sketched such a vigorous portrait. Few prose extracts are included since the prose exists to point to each new development which the verse unfolds; and this brings me to Mr. Grigson's second contention that the poems chosen seem to him Good or Goodish.

Most of them actually are; but some are palpably not. A.J. Munby, for instance, who was a good-hearted, eccentric, amateur sociological field-worker before the days of Booth and the Fabians, was what Mr. Betjeman would call a topographical poet; but if Mr. Grigson insists on playing the critic, Munby is, perhaps, best placed by saying that the fin de siècle figure of the Rev. T.T. Bradford is a collateral in aesthetic genealogy. Mr.

Grigson seems to me in his introduction to have been struck by donnish doubts. 'How can I honestly claim,' he asks, 'that this anthology represents the Victorians? A social scientist would at once reject such a pretension. All I can really be said to be doing is to put forward these poems as Good. Possibly I am wrong to mix these two methods, but, then again, probably I am not.' Why all this pother? An anthology is a personal statement, and he should be proud of his excellent job of clever photography from all angles. Our interest is held by the art of representation; not by the intrinsic merit of the poems, a few of which in entirety, and some lines in the second-rate, are Good, and the rest fascinating by quite other standards.

Mr. Grigson's notes suggest a further reflection. They are refreshingly informative, dogmatic and highly personal. Some of them, I confess, made me feel like an ageing uncle whose high-spirited nephew has impregnated the bed sheets with itching powder. Why, oh! why, is Samuel Butler's lament over the city of Montreal, the Discobolus and the stuffed owl, stigmatised as cheap? Is this tribute paid to that critical tradition which despises all humour other than the "ironic" and defines the latter word in as sour a fashion as possible? I wish that Mr. Grigson had not been so concerned to let the reader know in this book that he can distinguish between Good and Goodish. Indeed, the perfect representational anthology can be written only by someone who is prepared deliberately to set the peerless side by side with the abysmal and by a far bolder selection to prepare a dish which will recall every savour, the delectable and the odious, of the Victorian age.

NOEL ANNAN

NEW NOVELS

"The Golden Apples". By Eudora Welty. Bodley Head. 9s. 6d.
"Disobedience". By Alberto Moravia. Secker & Warburg. 7s. 6d.

"The Golden Apples" is about a small town called Morgana, in Mississippi. It is written in the form of seven stories. The first one is narrated by Katie Rainey, the dairywoman and general help, and it tells how Snowdie Maclain was abandoned by her husband, King, and how his attempt to return was upset by the antics of his twin sons. In the last story, Katie Rainey dies, King Maclain is back, white-haired and doddering, one of the twins is dead, the other is Mayor of the town. Thirty years or more have passed, each of them signalled by the usual births, deaths, marriages, suicides, collapses. There are few triumphs - the author is dealing with people whose triumphs consist not in awards or offices, but in living through without disaster to the end. When the end comes, there is a big, solemn funeral, and everyone turns up either to assist or to take part in the ceremony. It is, in fact, a novel about time and chance and mutability.

The method Eudora Welty has adopted does not make for ease in grasping the extremely complicated relationships between the many characters and their families. And this complexity is increased by the oblique manner of her approach to situations, as well as her very individual style; sometimes one feels, as in the juicier passages of Henry James, that everyone understands what is going on except the reader. But it is worth persevering. The style is difficult because what she is trying to say is difficult: the relationships are complicated because life in even the tamest Mississippi township is impossible to sort out neatly. It is a book which needs to be read twice, but the reader who gets to the end will need no prompting; for the people are real people, the town is real, the weather, the roads, the dresses, the food have been imagined with a vividness which makes one anxious to grasp them just as clearly, even if that means going over the whole thing a second time.

Eudora Welty's weaknesses are evident: a tendency to over-write, which I imagine she will shed sooner or later, and an occasional banality of idea which is shown up more cruelly by the indirectness of the approach. The opening story, though very well told, is really too slim to carry the weight of its characters; and the story called "Music from Spain" gets irretrievably lost in a welter of symbols. None of this matters a great deal, however. The book is conceived as a whole, and it is only in the last episode that the full force of its construction becomes felt. Then one forgives the difficulties, the obscurities, in the validity of this vision of the life of a small town; and remembers the sharpness of perception and the fullness of the book and its very American vitality:

> But it didn't seem to me [Kate Rainey is speaking] running in and out the way I was, that Snowdie had ever got a real good look at life, maybe. Maybe from the beginning. Maybe she just doesn't know the extent. Not the kind of look I got, and away back when I was twelve years old or so. Like something was put to my eye.

That sort of writing is worth taking a great deal of trouble over.

By contrast, "Disobedience" shows as particularly arid. "This short and beautifully developed study of a critical phase of adolescent life" is the blurb's description; but by now such studies are a familiar genre, and need the most exact handling to win our interest. Signor Moravia has written all too much of a study. His account of a fifteen-year-old boy's morbid rejection of life, his illness and subsequent resuscitation via a middle-aged nurse (who "initiates him into the mysteries of sex") is thorough, exact and convincing. But he writes without sympathy. The boy Luca never comes to life for a moment; and one is left at the end feeling that though there were doubtless good reasons for writing the book, there are not very many for reading it.

FRANK KAUSER

MAYERLING AGAIN

"Rudolf: The Tragedy of Mayerling." By Count Carl Lonyay. Hamish Hamilton. 18s.

To criticise this new book on Crown Prince Rudolf is, I feel painfully, an act of daring. Its author has superb credentials, and displays them whole-heartedly. First, he is the man who knows. His uncle married Rudolf's widow, and the Count has seen all the archives. They were entrusted to his charge in 1918, and when he had looked through them, "the facts concerning the death of my aunt's first husband and the tragedy of Mayerling were no longer a mystery to me." Which seems to promise revelation. On top of that, he is a qualified historian; his work is documented to the back teeth, and almost to the point of comedy. No lightest statement is immune from a numbered reference, and flourish of substantiation. And to crown all, his personality provokes alarm. It has the dash and arrogance one would expect in a Hungarian officer of high birth, and an apparent tendency to ride down all comers. Thus, for example, he concludes the preface: "As a regular soldier, courage always appealed to me. Therefore I wish to express my admiration for the courage of those who thrust upon me their uninvited advice on a subject of which they had no knowledge, and which, for the benefit of my work, I avoided accepting."

Well may the casual critic fear to speak. But there are times when hardihood is thrust upon one, therefore here goes.

First, with great diffidence, I would submit that after all his book contains nothing new; I mean no vital, hitherto unpublished facts. The most important facts were all known already, and were available, at least in German, to the world at large. If people still believe that Rudolf was a great lover, who died with Mary Vetsera for love, it is because they like to have it so and not for want of evidence. They don't need evidence. Enough that Franz Joseph's only son, young, brilliant and idealistic, the Habsburg heir and yet the champion of freedom,

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took his own life, and that a young and lovely girl chose to die with him. Why look a gift-horse in the mouth? Romance, at best, is only skin-deep; it is a feature of appearances and not of things in themselves. But it excites a universal longing, and the simple won't be done out of it. Count Lonyay thinks that the "romance of Mayerling" was Franz Joseph's work; that time would speedily have darkened it, and washed out the very name, but for his clumsy efforts at suppression. That seems unlikely; it is too glaringly the stuff of legend.

The not so simple, who suspect a rat, will find it here in two words; mental instability. Rudolf, to summarise Count Lonyay, was a born suicide, and therefore motive-hunting is a waste of time. Which sounds a little like the old fallacy, that insane actions are unsaused - but it is just the Count's way of speaking. If ever anyone had cause to die, it was Crown Prince Rudolf; he had all possible incentives, but ill-starred love. If not exactly born to suicide, he was a born psychopath, a victim of heredity and inbreeding. His childhood was a nursery of conflicts. In later years, of course he had father trouble, of an extremely painful and involved kind. His talents and burning energy were thwarted in every field, while dissipation was made easy, as a cure for nonsense. Drink, drugs, frustration, physical and intellectual breakdown, loss of control - what was he to do but die? And there was not much time. Once he had nearly shot his father "by accident"; he really thought it an accident, but may have felt it as a warning. At least, he talked of the "necessity for dying"; life had become impossible. And so - which is the crushing argument against all-for-love - he looked round for a co-suicide. He wished for company; in fact it was a sine qua non. He tried a couple of young officers, who merely declined with thanks. He tried his "steady", who confided in the police president. He talked of murdering his wife, who went to the Emperor. Nothing was done, and Mary Vetsera appeared. To her infatuation and "excessive snobbery" he did not apply in vain.

Such is the inner history of Mayerling, as told in the standard lives. This book explodes no bomb. It is repetitive and clumsy, and is thrown together, one would say, anyhow. Its airs of scholarship are a facade. But all the same it is good value, and extremely bracing. It has the charm of worldly wisdom and direct knowledge, strong personal reactions and a thoroughgoing want of sympathy. The Count has not, one gathers, much time for anyone. For Habsburgs he has none at all. But when we come to Stephanie, his aunt by marriage - then he goes berserk. He tears her limb from limb, he loads her with savage epithets, he quotes her diary with horrid glee. He says that she was "ugly, domineering, tactless and unintelligent", she was "a bully, a bore, a nagger and a fool" - in short an unmixed plague. One can't think what induced his uncle to marry her. It is perhaps a little easier to guess what inspired this book; but though Count Lonyay is a violent hater and supremely forthright, he is intelligent and realistic. There is no suggestion that the Crown Prince's bosom-plague brought on the tragedy of Mayerling.

K. JOHN

A SONG IN SEPTEMBER

Wild as the outset is the end of summer
When primeval winds run like wolves through the town.
They tear at the trees and they howl in the gutters,
and whatever is loose, they love to knock down;
they whistle at girls and steal them from lovers
who, trembling or gazing, too timidly kiss,
jeer at the dandy and break his umbrella,
suit rain at his collar with a serpentine hiss.
Regardless of headlines, they carry off papers
to read them at leisure on the rim of the earth
where - such is their laughter, so madly hilarious -
quite often, exhausted, they die of sheer mirth.

MICHAEL HAMBURGER

CORRESPONDENCE

DIEHARD'S DEFENCE

Sir, - In The New Statesman and Nation of September 16th there appeared a review of my book, "The Secret Army", signed by Mr. Aylmer Vallance. As I respect the views of others, however different they may be from mine, I would refrain from calling in question those of Mr. Vallance if it were not for the fact that to prove his case he quoted arguments, and what he calls "well established military facts", which have often been used by Communist propaganda but which do not correspond with the truth. In order to show that the Red Army was unable to relieve Warsaw in its fight against the Germans, Mr. Vallance avers that, "apart from the fact that the Russian Centre Group had advanced without pause for nearly 300 miles, thus stretching its communications severely, it had the intact Sud and Nord Heeresgruppen on its flanks". As it was, the Russian Centre Group (the 1st Bielorussian Group of Armies of Marshal Rokossovsky and the 1st Ukrainian Group of Armies of Marshal Koniev) started their attack in the middle of July, 1944, from the Kowel and Tarnopol line, where no military operation took place since April, and up to the end of July they reached the middle Vistula up to the suburbs of Warsaw. The distance covered was 140-150 miles and not 300 as given by the reviewer. Only the very northern section of the offensive, which was launched north of the Polesian marshes on June 23rd, and which reached the River Niemen on the outskirts of Eastern Prussia could boast of an advance of about 250 miles up to July 31st.

The alleged threat to the flanks of the Russian Centre Group by the Sud and Nord Heeresgruppen is likewise unfounded. Heeresgruppe Sud was at that time routed. Its 4th Panzer Army had been destroyed during fighting in the Zamosc area, and the remaining two armies, the 8th German Army and the Hungarian Army, were defeated and thrown back to the Carpathian mountains. Between the northern flank of the Russian Centre Group and the Heeresgruppe Nord there were two more groups of Russian armies marching in the direction of East Prussia, under the command of General Zaharoff and General Czerniakovsky respectively. Besides, the Heeresgruppe Nord was engaged in battle further north with the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Baltic Group of Armies and part of the Leningrad Group. Finally, the great distance itself barred any threat from this quarter to the Russian Centre Group.

The offensive reaction against the northern flank of Marshal Rokossovsky's 1st Bielorussian Group was undertaken by the 2nd German Army, the only non-disintegrated part of the whole Heeresgruppe Mitte. This army, however, was also seriously weakened in preceding battles and lost one corps which was surrounded and annihilated at Brest. It was reinforced by the Hermann Goering armoured division which Mr. Vallance describes as "immensely formidable" although it did not differ from the other Panzer divisions commanded by General Model, and not by General Guderian as stated by Mr. Vallance. Already on August 12th, General Model, with the driving "elan" of his group spent, and threatened at the rear by the forces of General Zaharoff was compelled to withdraw at the line Malkinia-Tluszcz-Praga. From that moment onwards Marshal Rokossovsky recovered his liberty of action and freedom from German pressure, the more so as the German forces were pressed westwards beyond the line of the River Narew. Rokossovsky, however, did not attack in the direction of Warsaw before September 10th, and having occupied the suburb of Praga remained idle on the eastern bank of the Vistula.

The assertion, therefore, that it was the military situation which made it impossible for the Russians to relieve the siege of Warsaw during the 63 days of the Polish capital's struggle lacks foundation. The German and Russian military communiques published in those days make it easy to verify the facts as stated by me.

T. BOR KOMOROWSKI

PRESSURE GROUPS

Sir,- You are of course quite entitled to criticise the Listeners' Association and perhaps also to refer to us as "absurd"; but if, by dubbing us a "pressure group" you mean to infer that there is some influence behind the Association, then may I assure you that such is not the case. We are merely a group of Listeners who desire to see the Communist influence banished from the B.B.C. and to bring about other reforms which will, if effected, make this monopoly more democratic and bring it under democratic control.

We did not object to Mr. Pritt because he is a "Left-wing cruiser" but because the talk he gave with Lord Hailsham as his foil was an eulogy of certain deplorable aspects of the Soviet legal system. One of our objects is certainly to make the B.B.C. "anti-Communist", but we most definitely do not "advocate passing it over to private hands". What we do want is the establishment of other competitive broadcasting systems as well as the B.B.C., whose retention we have consistently favoured.

If you are under the impression that we are a Conservative Party off-shoot I assure you you are quite mistaken. We have never taken any part in politics as that word is understood in this country. We are anti-Communist - anti any form of totalitarianism in fact - and we agree with Mr. Arthur Deakin when he stated recently that Communism was not a political question but a conspiracy against the safety of our country. In fact we said it first.

When you invite Listeners to report any case of "gross impartiality" I presume you mean "partiality". If such cases are also reported to us, we shall be glad to join in any protest that may be desirable.

Listeners' Association
71, Victoria Road, W.8

C.H. ROLLESTON
Hon. Gen. Secretary

[A "pressure group" means a group that exerts pressure, not one upon which it is exerted. We agree that Mr. Pritt apologises for deplorable aspects of Soviet justice; but what can one do for an organisation that assumes that he should therefore not be allowed to discuss the matter on the air with Lord Hailsham?

Ed. N.S.& N.]

PERSIA

Sir,- In Mr. Crossman's very interesting review of George Lenczowski's "Russia and the West in Iran" there is one remark which needs correction. He speaks of British policy still retaining "one sanction, which was used with great effectiveness in the 1946 crisis.... We could land troops at Basra....and disintegrate the Teheran Government by promoting tribal disturbances in Southern Persia." He adds, "with half a dozen successors to T.E. Lawrence up our sleeve we have exploited our oil resources at negligible cost."

A heroic, if somewhat cruel picture, but, I fear, quite untrue. Soldiers were landed at Basra all right, but there were no T.E. Lawrences among them. The modern revival of tribal life, with its ancient economy and disorder in the South of Persia is a very curious example of the power of reaction in human affairs, but it is one in which the only part played by westerners was by Nazi agents from 1941 to 1945, and that was on too small a scale to be radically effective.

The contrary belief, that these tribes "fermented" because of the action of the all-powerful British Secret Service directed by a bloody-minded Embassy in Teheran, has an interesting history. In the days before World War I, and during it, order was largely maintained by agreements, (sometimes not over scrupulous, and in the war designed to promote internal conflict), which were concluded between our Bushire Residents or Shiraz Consuls, and local chieftains. This policy was finally terminated on the rise of Reza Shah in 1925 and never resorted to since. This was for two good reasons, one that the old

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policy conflicted with the policy of supporting Central Government (which modernisation was making possible), and because experience had at last taught us what useless aids to policy tribes are, (especially "fermented tribes"). We explained this daily. We were never believed. It was the firm conviction of Reza Shah, of his court, and of his ministers, and of all his subjects, that in fact we had a deep and busy hand in tribal unrest. Not even our sacrifice of a true friend, the Shaykh of Mahommerah, to Reza Shah's merciless despotism, could convince the Persian Government, or indeed the foreign Legations in Teheran, that we were not in reality pursuing the old, glamorous, "great game". Such was (and is) the combined power of Kipling, Lawrence, and our generous output of Secret Service fiction!

In 1946 the Southern tribes rebelled, and though they did it all on their own, they seemed rather to furnish the last needed proof of British brilliance and patience and wickedness. Russian radios told the world about it and for once, I suspect, they really believed what they were saying. To add to the excitement a member of the Tudeh (People's) Party found a photograph of a British Consul in Shiraz receiving some captured German arms from a tribal chief, which was taken to be a picture of the Consul doling out British arms to the hordes of the Qashqai. I interviewed the Khan of the Qashqai in his camp for my paper, and I expect I unwittingly supplied yet more evidence of the hidden British power.

Not that evidence is much needed, the legend is so deeply believed: even many tribesmen fancy that they are following our leadership. Mr. Crossman has abundant excuse for making his mistake, but a mistake it is, and a large one. There are no T.E. Lawrences in Persia today, and there have not been these thirty years.

90, Eaton Terrace, S.W.1. CHRISTOPHER SYKES

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

Sir,- I have read the Open Letter to Mr. Bevan signed "Consultant" in your issue of September 30th and agree that it represents the views of a considerable number of the consultants and pseudo-consultants of small local hospitals.

Before 5th July, 1948, we had two sorts of hospitals in this country: the municipal (which provided more than two-thirds of the beds), staffed to a large extent by full-time specialists, and the voluntary in which the specialists were honorary and part-time and included not a few general practitioners who did a little specialist practice in their spare time. These voluntary hospitals were run by the doctors for the doctors and each was a law unto itself, and with some exceptions each endeavoured to be self-sufficient, providing a complete service with perhaps two or three beds only for some of the specialties such as eyes, skins, etc.

But every medical authority without exception agreed that this could not be efficient and that large planning authorities (now the Regional Boards) were essential.

Of course the local doctors of these ex-voluntary hospitals do not like this. They had done exactly what they liked before July, 1948, and now feel that they know what is required for their own hospital and that this should be provided irrespective of what it may cost. But money is tight now, and Regional Boards have to assess the needs of the whole region and decide which are the most important, and make up their minds also whether some of these tiny special departments in the several small hospitals cannot, with advantage to all concerned, be replaced by a single special department in one of them.

The views of the doctors must of course be heard, but the final decision must rest with the large planning authorities.

House of Commons, S.W.1. Somerville Hastings

WEEK-END COMPETITIONS

No. 1,077: Set by Naomi Lewis

The usual prizes are offered for the discovery of a lost 8-line poem by one of the following, on a real or hypothetical pet animal: Marlowe, Shakespeare, Donne, Swift, Johnson, Byron, Hardy. Entries by October 24th.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 1,074: Set by Arachne MacLeod

Competitors are invited, for the usual prizes, to submit samples of a patchwork poem taken from twentieth-century poems. Limit 12 lines, and references must be given.

Report by Arachne MacLeod

Necessity makes strange bed-fellows. Here was Belloc doubled up with David Gascoyne, Lord A. Douglas bundled in between Herbert Read and Louis MacNeice, Auden next to A.A. Milne, Newbolt to Ezra Pound. Robert Gaffikin and Ferdinand both struck a brilliant opening:

> Perched on my city office stool
> See an old unhappy bull

and Isabel Finlayson opened strongly:

> As I sat musing, 'twas not one but ten
> Tall unpopular men
> Sprouting despondently at area gates:

Two guineas to P.M., Margaret Usborne, and Laurence Fowler. Honourable mention: J.P. Stevenson, C.W.V. Wordsworth, S. Lewis, E.M., Doris Dalglish.

> Buy my English posies
> Flower of sinners' rue
> -They haven't got no noses
> At Mass in Croaghdoo.

> The night my father got me
> A hive for the honey-bee
> -(O to have a little house
> And honey still for tea!)-
> Everyone suddenly burst out singing
> "I hear a rabbit in a snare,
> Do you know where she has hid her?"
> But there wasn't a rabbit, not
> anywhere there!

(Kipling, Housman, Chesterton, R.N.D. Wilson, Housman, Yeats, Padraic Colum, Brooke, Sassoon, Stephens, Thompson, A.A. Milne.)

P.M.

> On a hot, hot day, and I in pyjamas for the heat
> (For indeed I do not love it...you knew? You are
> not blind.)
> "I shall rush out as I am and walk the street,"
> My young love said to me. "My brothers won't mind."
>
> Her hair lay coiled and tame at the back of her head.
> Pale in her black; dry ey'd; she stood alone.
> I laughed and said "The Night is passing and done.
> I'd toddle safely home and die in bed."
>
> May she marry a ghost and bear him a kitten and may
> They come, shaking in triumph their long green hair:
> When past, present and future are mixed in a certain
> way.
> But I will escape with my dog on the far side of
> the fair.

(Lawrence, Eliot, Eliot, Padraic Colum, O. Sitwell, Brooke, Lord A. Douglas, Sassoon, Stephens, Joyce, W.J. Turner, MacNeice).

MARGARET USBORNE

> I know that I shall meet my fate
> In the room with the sofa hiding the grate
> Rocking and shocking the barmaid.
> God! I will pack and catch a train
> Because I do not hope to turn again
> And I in pyjamas for the heat.

(Yeats, Auden, E. Sitwell, Brooke, Eliot, Lawrence).

LAURENCE FOWLER

THE ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

WALPOLE, ZANGWILL AND STRINDBERG.

In Rodney Ackland and Hugh Walpole's The Old Ladies Mary Clare plays her villainness much like Charles Laughton playing Cap'n Hook. No doubt it is another sign of emancipation that what would be burlesque in the male is horrific in the other sex. Appetite for horror varies, and perhaps one could plot the peaks of The Old Ladies' popularity in terms of coming wars. First the novel, Stevenson turned Georgian, swashbuckling in taffeta; the play made a big hit in 1935, and now in 1950 is doing so again. Frith Banbury's production launched at the Lyric, Hammersmith looks destined for transfer.

Privately I was relieved that at the worst moments I was able to peep and botanise. Perhaps that is the right effect in horror, that one should see there can be another turn of the screw but not feel it. I wondered if the reason is because at his climax Walpole goes soft on his own self-torture? His mother-figure, for instance - Mrs Amorest is beautifully played by Mary Jerrold - is properly comforting and clear-sighted. She pooh-poohs the spinster's terrors but as soon as she finds they have some basis, has a straight talk with the mentally deficient old witch who is terrorising the old maid. At the last moment when she is about to kiss the victim good-night - we know though she doesn't that the witch is lurking in the shadows - the widow prays over her. It ought to be the big moment, so why do we sit cold? It is not Miss Jerrold's fault but very likely Walpole's because in spite of the sharp social observation in the portrait his mother-figure is at bottom a sentimental abstraction.

There is just as much sharp insight in Jean Cadell's frightened old spinster from Exeter, and perhaps, too, a harder core in the writing of this part. I came away wondering if it is a sign of grace or the opposite that Walpole, as inventor, and we, as audience, make and prettify these images of safety only to stamp on them like small boys and orgiastically destroy?

Zangwill's The King of the Schnorrers at the Saville came as a surprise to one woefully ignorant of Zangwill's work. The play which has had no professional production in England till now has a remarkable sense of style. Some of this is in Robert Mitchell's production and even more perhaps in Ernest Milton's performance, but the writing is so good that once again we have to marvel at the English theatre's historical rule (proved of course by conspicious exceptions) "No conscientious writer admitted", at least not while he is alive. Zangwill has the advantage of fresh material, Jewish life in eighteenth century London, conflict between the despised "German community" and the aristocrats from Spain with their governing Mahamad. "A schnorrer" is a professional beggar, and the Spanish hero is a Don Quixote among beggars. An old joke is treated high-handedly, the don bangs his sarpence, exploits the paradox of his character with a sense of style and makes shrewdness into poetry. Meier Tzelniker, a comedian whose talent has not been properly recognised here, is his Sancho Panza and does as well as his author permits, though Zangwill doesn't handle low-falutin' so well as high. Anyone who wants a genuinely new flavour in the theatre should try this one.

Strindberg's last piece, The Great Highway, has not been translated before. Ebba Low and Elizabeth Sprigge have made a workmanlike version for this production at the Watergate. Strindberg here is at his most symbolic, and it is noteworthy how the intensity diminishes as he goes further from realism, though it is in intensity that Strindberg's power resides. The action is a pilgrim's progress through life to the creamtorium and "the last gate". It is thrown together carelessly and, I should imagine, not long worked over. There are moments no other writer could give, particularly a curious passage in which a Japanese prepares for ceremonial suicide. A number of threadbare symbols are handled freshly and, as a whole, it is a valuable sidelight rather than an addition to the masterpieces.

MONTAGU SLATER

RUBENS AND ROWLANDSON

The exhibition at Wildenstein's of paintings and drawings by Rubens (arranged in aid of the Lord Mayor's National Thanksgiving Fund) has to fit a small gallery and so it must, in general, present the smaller gestures of an artist accustomed to making larger ones. Many of the paintings are sketches for monumental compositions for tapestries, or great schemes of decoration such as the ceiling of Inigo Jones's Banqueting Hall in Whitehall. Because these are so intimately connected with the working out of his ideas, and consequently with the elements of his style and ambitions, there is little of his artistic personality which cannot be learned from this well selected and well catalogued exhibition. Besides, in few if any of these works has the hand of the studio assistant diminished the energy of the master's conception. Among the portraits is Rubens's copy of a Titian Philip II, a painting which projects such a real presence that it is hard to realise that it was not quickened by contact with the living model, and was constructed second-hand from another's experience. It is fascinating to see Rubens's normal expression, above all the baroque flow of his forms, constrained by the graver rhythms of Titian. It is an act of homage to the original. It is good to see again the portrait of the Infanta Margarita from the Wellington bequest, and particularly to follow the edges of the nun's white cap and veil as they tauten and slacken against the girl's chubby face, a piece of virtuosity which is also completely attuned to the painter's sympathy with this charming sitter. Another example of this tender virtuosity is to be found in the painting of the dead child in the Ashmolean picture, one of the finest passages of painting in the exhibition. The one landscape is a masterpiece - "A Forest with a Deer Hunt". The sun is low in the sky. One looks down two parallel vistas as through the two lenses of a spectroscope, so intense is the recession. One path is flooded with the sunlight which blazes through a screen of rocks and branches in the foreground. The other path, shut off by a narrow grove, is dark. The panel, and these two perspectives, is boldly divided by a group of tree trunks rooted in the bottom edge of the picture, and united by the movement of the stag and dogs as they wheel from light into shadow. The complexity, the mystery and the truth of this picture, painted late in life, was to me the glory of this show.

* * *

The Rowlandsons from Mr. Gilbert Davis's collection now on view at the New Burlington Galleries should be, for those who have naively considered him a hack, evidence enough to prove how he combined the most subtle calligraphy with the power to create figures of a satisfying solidarity, and enough to prove the consistency and variety of his observation. There is no need to say that he could be excellent, coarse or sharp, but if you want proof of the delicacy of his hand, look at the little drawing of musicians (116) made when he was near death or for the variety of his comedy, Nos. 5, 78, 79, 89, 99,108, 132. His drawing of pigs might serve as a parody of Morland and is at the same time acceptable in the way that a Morland seldom is. He is one of the few artists who worked within the terms of the Picturesque and gave it life, and I know of no illustration of Shakespeare which is so true to the text and to Shakespeare's world as the "Falstaff and Doll Tearsheet". Having little space myself I wish that Mr. Davis, in the introduction to the catalogue, could have offered a more spirited justification for his wonderful collection.

BASIL TAYLOR

ENTERTAINMENTS

EVERYMAN. Ham.1525. Marx Brothers Festival. Now "Duck Soup" (U) and Chaplin in "Easy Street" (U). From Oct.23: "Horse Feathers" (U).

STRATFORD-on-Avon. Last 2 weeks. 1950 Shakespeare Festival. Evenings 7.30. Mats. Wed., Sat., 2.30. All seats bookable through principal agents or Memorial Theatre.

ARTS (Ten.3334). Evgs. ex. Mon. 7.0. Sat. & Sun. 5 and 8. "Queen Elizabeth". Membership.

UNITY. Last week "Winkles and Champagne". Weds. to Suns. 7.30. Ass. Mem. 2s.6d. EUS.8391. "Longitude 49" opens October 27.

ITALIAN Plays Festival. Outstanding Eng. Co. Rudolf Steiner Theatre, Oct. 22. "To Live in Peace". Enquiries & booking: GLA.2892.

MERCURY. Park 5700. Evenings 7.30. Mat. Sat. 5.0. Mime Play, "L'Enfant Prodigue".

POPLE'S Palace. Adv.4244. Sun. Oct. 15. "Le Roi". (French). (A).

SOUTH Place Sunday Concerts. Oct. 15, 6.30. Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., Holborn. Turner String Quartet. Haydn G, Op. 77; Bartok 5; Beethoven F, Op. 135. Admission 1s.

THE Bach Cantata Club, St. Margaret's Church, Westminster, S.W.1., Tues. Oct. 24 at 8 p.m. Bicentenary Concert of works by J.S. Bach, incl. Magnificat, Church Cantata No. 42 "God goeth up," and Sonnelli Arias. Margaret Ritchie, Nancy Evans, William Herbert, George James, The Oriana Madrigal Society, The Boyd Neel Orchestra. Conductor: Charles Kennedy Scott. Adm. by ticket, in advance only, 8s.6d. & 5s. by post (send s.a.e.) from Wilfred Lindsay, 29 Spencer Rd., S.W.20 or by personal applicn. to Oxford University Press, 44 Conduit St., W.1.

MARK Hambourg. To celebrate his Diamond Jubilee, will make his 500th London appearance on Sunday, Oct. 22, at 7 p.m. at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, in a Beethoven-Chopin Programme. Tickets 2s.6d. to 12s.6d. from Chappell's (May.7600) and usual Agents. Presented by Harold Fielding (Whi.4041).

R.B.A. Galleries, Suffolk Street, Haymarket. Next week's Concerts: Tues. at 8: Louise Marshall (mezzo soprano), Daniel Kelly (piano). Thurs. at 8: Murray Brown (piano), Ruth Allsebrook (soprano). First perf. Stanley Bate Sonatina and Cressley-Holland song. 5s., 3s., at door, Chappell's, agents. Director of Concerts: Nicholas Chevreaux.

6TH Concert of French Music. Wigmore Hall, Thur. Oct. 19 at 7. Works by Debussy, Alain, Martinet, Chabrier, Schmitt, Dutilleux, Milhaud. Jacqueline Bonneau & Genevieve Joy (2 pianos). Maurice Allard (Bassoon). 10s., 7s.6d., 5s., 2s.6d. from Hall (WEL.2141).

IN aid of Stepney Pacifist Service Unit. Piano Recital by Frank Merrick. Scarlatti, Beethoven ("Appassionata"), Debussy, Prokofiev, William Wordsworth, etc. Monday, October 23, 7.30 p.m. Conway Hall, W.C.1. Tickets: 4s., 6s., 10s., from Chappell, 50 New Bond St., W. 1. (MAY.7600) or Stepney P.S.U., 355 The Highway, E.1. (ROY.4664).

ENJOY yourself at the Gala Old Time Dance Club, St. Saviour's Hall, Halton Place (behind Harrod's) Knightsbridge, every Wednesday 8.30 p.m. Old Time Dancing and tuition. Special Saturday dances, October 14 & 28; with orchestra. 3s.6d.

EXHIBITIONS

GARLAND Facsimiles and Turnstile Prints are on show daily (9.30 - 6.0 and Sat. morn.) at 11 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. N.E. Corner of Lincoln's Inn Fields. Illustrated catalogue on request.

GOPAL Pila, 50 South Molton St., W.1. Jankel Adler, 1895-1949. Drawings, Water Colours & Gouaches.

HANOVER Gallery, 32A St. George St., W.1. Recent Paintings by Francis Bacon. French Exhibition Posters. Paintings by Hilly. 10-5.30. Saturdays 10-1.

REDFERN Gallery, 20 Cork St., W.1. Recent Paintings by D. Khayatt; recent paintings by Oscar Dalvit and Watercolours by Paul Nash. Hours 10-6, Sat. 10-1. Exhibition closes October 21.

ROYAL Academy: Paintings from Woburn Abbey. Weekdays 10-7. Sundays 2-6. Admission 1s.

BEN Uri Art Gallery, 14 Portman St., W.1. Paintings by Isaac Amitai (Israeli artist); Wood Carvings by Abraham Loseff. Mon. - Fri. 11-6 p.m., Sundays 3-6 p.m.

PAINTINGS by 3 Artists. Margaret Bergen, Marion Edie, Marcus Lyon. Heal and Son, 196 Tottenham Court Road, W.1.

WERNER Gallery, 26 Litchfield St., Charing Cross Rd., W.C.2. Paintings by Meninsky. Oct. 10-31. Open 10-6, Sats. 10-1.

ARCHER Gallery, 303 Westbourne Grove, W.11. Paintings by Basil Rakocsi, Kenneth Hall, Patrick Scott. Till October 28. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. except Sundays.

ROLAND Browse & Delbanco, 19 Cork Street, W.1. Recent paintings by Clifford Hall and Theatre Designs and Drawings by Leslie Hurry.

MARLBOROUGH, 17/18 Old Bond St., W.1. French Landscape by Contemporary French painters. Daily 10-5.30, Sat. 10-1.

LEVEQUE Gallery, 30 Bruton Street, W.1. Recent Paintings and Drawings by Ben Nicholson. 10-5.30. Sats. 10-1.

THOMAS Rowlandson: Arts Council Exhibition. Watercolours and Drawings from the Gilbert Davis Collection. New Burlington Galleries, Old Burlington Street. Open till November 4. Mon. Wed. Fri. Sat. 10-6. Tues. Thurs. 10-8. Admission 1s.

JOHN Olday, Exhibition of Drawings. 28A Tavistock Road (Westbourne Park Station), 2-6 p.m., until October 31.

PAUL Alexander Gallery, 190 Kensington Church Street, W.8. Pottery by Dora Lunn, October 4-28.

ARCADE Gallery, Gothic and Renaissance Paintings: the Anghiari Master, Palma, Bugiardini, Zelotti, Dossi, Schools of Catalonia, Vienna, Florence. Oct.12-Nov. 5. 28 Old Bond Street, W.1.

CONTEMPORARY Art Society: Anyone wishing to join should apply to C.A.S., Tate Gallery, S.W.1. Annual subscriptions from 1 guinea.

LECTURES & MEETINGS

UNIV. of London: A lecture on "Sudan Plantations - a page in British Overseas History" by Mr. A. Gaitskell (Manager, Sudan Plantations Syndicate) at 5 p.m. on Oct. 19 at the London School of Economics and Political Science, Houghton St. Aldwych, W.C.2. Adm.free:without tkt.

MR. D.N. Pritt, K.C., speaking on "The Need for British-Czechoslovak Friendship" on Tues. Oct. 17, at 7.30 p.m. sharp at Lidice House, 20 Pont St., S.W.1. Chair: Mr. Gordon Schaffer. Don't miss this meeting. Nearest stn. Knightsbridge. Buses: 19, 137, 46, 22. All welcome.

BRITISH-Polish Friendship Soc. The Oder-Neisse Agreement: Frontier for Peace. Speaker: Cdr. E.P. Young (R.N. Retd.). Chairman: Dr. S. Osiakowski. Friday, Oct. 13 at 7.45 p.m. at 61 Portland Place, W.1. (Tel. LANgham 6893). Refreshments. All welcome.

MAURICE Edelman, M.P. "The Council of Europe, Success or Failure". Oct. 19, 7.30 at 1 Broadhurst Gdns. Assocn. German Socialdemocrats.

FABIAN Colonial Bureau: Mr. John Dugdale M.P., Minister of State for the Colonies, on "East Africa". Oct. 18. Holborn Hall, 7 p.m. Admission 1s. 'Phone ABBey 2866.

BULGARIA To-day. Derek Kartun, "Daily Worker" Foreign Editor, just returned. New Bulgarian Film, "Talin the Eagle". Islington Town Hall. Thurs., Oct. 19, 7.30 p.m. Tickets 2s.6d.: Secretary, British Bulgarian Friendship Committee, 17 Blomfield Road, W.9.

BEN Uri Gallery, 14 Portman St., W.1. Thurs. Oct. 19 at 8 p.m. Studio Group (for young people) presents an Open Debate on the Arts.

BEN Uri Gallery, 14 Portman St., W.1. Oct. 18 at 8 p.m. Studio Group presents "A Man in the Thicket" by Mary Flack. Rehearsed reading by professional actors. Non-members 1s.

THE Importance of Speaking Well, Discussion meeting organised by C.L.P.S. Mon. Oct. 16, 7.30 p.m. N.U.J. Club, 12 Gt. Newport Street, W.C.2. Speaker: Jack Diamond. Admission 1s.6d.

YOUR Public Library - What It Is and What It Does - II. A lecture will be given by members of the staff of the St. Marylebone Public Libraries, at Stern Hall, 33 Seymour Place, Marble Arch, on Monday, Oct. 16 at 8 p.m. Admission free.

SOUTH Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., W. C. 1. Sunday mornings at 11 a.m. October 15: S.K. Ratcliffe, "Can We Be Hopeful?".

CONWAY Discussion Circle, South Place Ethical Society. Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., W.C.1. Weekly discussion in the Library on Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m. October 17: G.E. O'Dell, "Personal Psychology and Ethical Ideals". Admission free. Collection.

I.C.A. "The Conception of Value for the Art Critic". Illustrated Lecture by Prof. Helmut Hungerland. 8 p.m. Thurs. October 19. Anatomy Theatre, Univ. College, Gower St. W.C.1. Adm. free. (membership enqs.: Inst.of Contemporary Arts, 17 Dover St., W.1. Tel: GRO.6186.)

THE Satisfactions of this Life. Virginia Flemming, at 11 a.m. October 15, The Ethical Church, 4a Inverness Place, London, W.2.

THEOSOPHY, Public Lecture, Sundays 7 p.m. United Lodge of Theosophists, 17 Great Cumberland Place, Marble Arch, W.1. All welcome. October 15: Karma, Fate and Freewill.

PERSONALIST Group, Gordon Rattray Taylor on "Are Workers Human?". Conway Hall, Monday, Oct. 16 at 7.30 p.m.

SEX Education Society, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, W.C., at 7.30 p.m. on Mon., October 16, Norman Haire on "The Cost of English Morals". Non-mems. 2s. Tickets obtainable from Secretary, 58 Devonshire Mews West, London, W.1. WHIbeck 7840.

THE Linguists' Club, 20 Grosvenor Place, S.W.1. Oct. 14 at 6 p.m. Miss Helen Kapp: "The Artist in Society". Oct. 21 at 6 p.m. Mr. A. J. Ellis: "The Spirit of Greek Folk-Music".

LECTURE COURSES & SPECIALISED TRAINING

FABIAN Society Autumn Lectures:- "Whither Socialism? - Values in a changing Civilisation. Livingstone Hall, Broadway, London, S.W.1. at 7.15 p.m. Oct.20, Austen Albu, M.P.: "Socialism and the Study of Man." Oct.27, Rev. John Groser: "Does Socialism need Religion?". Nov.3, Dr. J. Bronowski: "Lessons of Science." Nov.10, Dylan Thomas: "The Artist's Approach." Nov.17: R.H.S. Crossman, M.P.: "Socialist Values in a changing Civilisation." Tkts. 2s.6d., 4s., Whole Series 10s., 16s. Apply Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth St., London, S. W. 1.

UNIVERSITY of London: A course of 3 lectures by Prof. Dr. W. Holtzmann (Bonn) at 5.30 p.m. on Oct. 16, 17 and 18, at University of London, Senate House, W.C.1. (entrance from Malet St. or Russell Sq.) Oct. 16, 17, Medieval Empire and Nations; Oct. 18, Recent Studies of Canon Law. Admission free, without ticket.

UNIVERSITY of London: A course of 3 lectures on "Epochs of Roman Religious Feeling", by Prof. K. Latte (Göttingen) at 5.30 p.m. on Oct. 17, 19 and 24 at Inst. of Education, Malet St., W.C.1. Admission free, without ticket.

INTELLIGENCE Testing and Class System of Education. Conference convened by National Cultural Committee of Communist Party. Sat. October 21, 10.30-1, 2.30-4.30. Beaver Hall, Garlick Hill, Mansion House, E.C.4. Tickets 2s.6d. from 27 Bedford Street, W.C.2. marked 'Intell. Test', or at door.

SOCIALISM & the Individual. Week-end Conference organised by Central London Fabian Society at Pasture Wood, Nr. Dorking, Oct. 20/22. Speakers: H.L. Beales, Prof. H. Levy and Christopher Mellis, M.P. Particulars from Miss Johnstone, 198 Somervell Rd., Nr. Harrow, Middx.

ITALIAN courses and lectures at the Italian Institute, beginning Oct. 23, 1950. Open also to non-members. For details please apply to the Secretary, the Italian Institute, 39 Belgrave Square, S.W.1. SLO.0458.

NEYSA Grahame (Director, Hovel Theatre Studio) will train a few Drama Students privately. Stanislavsky method. 23 St. Ann's Villas, W.11. (SLO.1040).

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